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CUBA — **New Church In A New Country** JAMES HIGGINS

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NEWS & VIEWS

Perspective on Paul

A commentary by Father Eugene Kennedy in the Chicago newsletter *Overview* puts Pope Paul in a light kindlier than anything you'd expect to encounter outside the Polyglot Press.

According to Kennedy, Paul is no indecisive Hamlet constantly wringing his hands between progressive advances and cautious retreats, but a man who knows precisely what he is about.

"Paul's theory," by Kennedy's reading, "comes down to a seeding of the consciousness of the church for the changes that will inevitably take place even though Paul may, in many ways, seem to resist them in his own lifetime. This approach is based on his appraisal of the chances for effective change that will not destroy the church by coming too prematurely or without sufficient basic preparation."

Kennedy cites the encyclical on birth control as "an excellent example" of Paul's approach:

"The Pope reiterates the traditional teaching of the church while making it clear that he is aware of the advances in science, medicine and psychology that urge a reconsideration of the position. He says, however, that he cannot achieve the synthesis that is necessary to incorporate this new thinking into the church; he thereby makes this a task, howsoever subtly, for the theologians and other scholars in the church to deal with. Paul knows the implications of introducing these issues into the church's awareness but he feels that he cannot effectively do more than this at the present time."

Equally benign analysis is offered for issues ranging from the Synod to gossip about Paul's possible resignation.

"The Synod spoke an old language to the world," Kennedy writes, "but it also allowed new voices and dissenting votes on subjects like the traditional discipline of celibacy. Paul reaffirms this discipline in the traditional language with the knowledge that he has set in motion the forces that will ultimately effect a change in this practice. He lets the talk of retirement develop even though he may not do anything about it in his own lifetime; he knows that it will become, like the [papal] business suit and the gradual eclipse of medieval pomp, the prerogative of his successors."

Pope Paul is paying "a heavy price" in popularity for his strategy, but he lives, says Kennedy, not only with "the impatience of critics with another view," but also with the "vision and hope" that "this measured course of moving forward will prove to be more successful than the course of instant and widespread changes."

Red-Painting a Prelate

Bishop Sergio Méndez Arceo of Cuernavaca, who has been under fire for some time for his progressive pronouncements and associations, was greeted at Mexico City airport recently by Catholic rightists, who doused him with red paint.

Méndez Arceo was en route home from the meeting in Chile of Christians for Socialism [*Commonweal*, 6/16/72].

The rightists did not approve of his presence at the meeting. Nor did they like his comment to the Argentine magazine *Panorama* that he attended "because I am convinced that for all the underdeveloped nations of Latin America there is no other road than socialism as the solution to the contradictions of the present socio-political system."

Meanwhile, Mexico City's influential daily *El Heraldo* reports that Méndez Arceo is under investigation for orthodoxy by the Vatican. A Father Pedro López Gallo is said to be the Vatican's special envoy conducting the investigation in Mexico.

No one is discounting the reports, but few are predicting that the investigation will go far. According to one news agency, "observers of the Latin-American church scene are convinced that Don Sergio is too popular and too well-known to have to fear any drastic moves on the part of higher church authorities." On the other hand, "observers" have been misreading the Vatican on this point for centuries.

One-Upping the Army

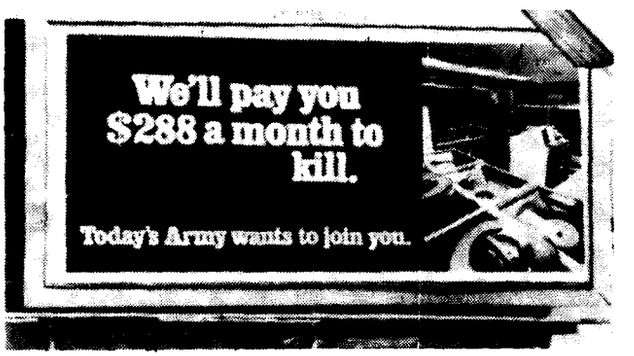
The Citizens Committee for Honesty in Billboards is planning to take on the "New Army" in the 28 states where it has chapters, and give it more of the Syracuse treatment.

In Syracuse, the Committee has been quietly blacking-out and editing "New Army" billboards to make them conform to "reality."

A billboard that once read, "We'll pay you $288 a month to learn a skill," was altered to read, "We'll pay you $288 a month to kill." (Photo below)

Another Army billboard suggesting, "If your job puts you to sleep, try one of ours," had a picture of a helicopter removed, and a picture of gravestones substituted in its place.

The Committee indicated that the action was prompted by the fact that most of the "New Army" billboards are in low-income areas, placed there "to trap low-income youths who cannot find a job" into enlisting.



Odds and Ends

—Several Catholic-left folks were among the arts and letters group arrested June 27 for impeding a passageway of the Senate during an anti-war action, including Francine Gray, Alice Mayhew, Leonard Mayhew, Garry Wills. For Wills it was the second time around. Women arrested report that they were threatened with "strip searches" if they did not answer questions about their sex.

—A Marine battalion-commander's order at Camp Schwab, Okinawa, outlawing "*all gestures . . . used to express a particular ethnic group's pride, unity and identification*," has produced one court-martial and the drawing up of papers for two more. The charges in all three cases: "dapping in the mess hall." Dapping is the military term for the special handshakes denoting black unity and pride.

—The latest piece of porno from Nashville: a song called "The Richard Nixon Waltz." Lyrics: "Under God we all are free/That's the way it ought to be . . . You and I can bring that day/ but one great man must lead the way./Join with me friends and sing the Richard Nixon Waltz."

—Finally, Jack Nicklaus' comment on the issue raised by the five Vietnam Vets Against the War who, protesting the Vietnam escalations, chained themselves to a tree on the 18th fairway at the recent U.S. Open at Monterey: "I was more worried about my second shot."

JOHN DEEDY

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CORRESPONDENCE

Berrigan's Letter

Washington, D.C.

To the Editors: Not since I was a student in Paris, have I read such a tremendous piece of Christian testimony as P. Berrigan's letter to Bishop Baum [May 26]. The thirties was the decade of "Sept," "La Vie Intellectuelle," Maritain, Mauriac and Bernanos. Fascism was growing and World War II was being prepared. The "bien-pensants," we may say the "conventionally wise" of the times, were trying to keep the status-quo, the "established disorder" in the words of Mounier. Armies were getting stronger and stronger, and civilians poorer and poorer. The statesmen of the times were making treaties to maintain the "balance of power." The Roman legions were "Christianizing" the Ethiopians and while the poor people of the world were helping the Republic in Spain, literally thousands of bishops were helping the fascist armies. To be a Catholic in Europe at that time was embarrassing and shameful. Almost as much as it is today in America. It was the prophetic voice of Mounier and Bernanos that witnessed the love of Christ in the middle of apathy and treason. That prophetic voice has fallen today on P. Berrigan.

Nobody should attempt to add to, nor detract anything from, that tremendous piece of Christian literature. May I make a few comments through my personal experience.

Shouldn't we say that no man has done more harm to the church than Constantine, the man who defeated armies with the sign of the cross, proclaimed Christian an empire by decree and officialized the bishops? The word of the Lord was intended to be a leaven to revolutionize the state. The alliance of church and state made a bureaucracy of the church, and "the goals of bureaucracies are simply not the goal of Christ."

May I take exception to Berrigan's philosophical interpretation of the war

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PARIS AFTER MIAMI

The return of the American negotiating team to the Paris peace talks may only signal President Nixon's awareness of the domestic political liabilities created by his decision of last May to quit these talks. It hardly suits to have the peace talks in abeyance through one's own responsibility, while Democrats make peace the central issue of the Presidential campaign and while Democrat Presidential nominee George McGovern takes to the hustings with a promise to have every American soldier and every American prisoner "back home in America" within ninety days of his inauguration. Better under the circumstances to continue the exercise of the Paris talks, however much one might regard the whole business as a charade.

If this is the Nixon attitude—a notion not dispelled by the timing of the reopening of the Paris talks for the day the Democratic Presidential nominee would be making his acceptance speech before his party's convention—then Mr. Nixon is continuing to play a cynical and unworthy game. By the same token, if the resumption of the talks is mere tactic in some larger strategy—a possibility not to be dismissed either—he may be flirting with something smacking of political immorality. As all know now, the previous resumption-curtailment of the Paris talks set the stage, by design or not, for the mining of the ports of North Vietnam. It would be unspeakable if the present resumption were used in any way to manufacture an excuse for some further escalation, such as an all-out attack (as distinct from what seems to be a policy of 'protective-reaction' bombings) on the earthen dikes, sluice gates and dams of North Vietnam. That stratagem is hopefully beyond Richard Nixon. On the other hand, there was the expression of openness to the dike-bombing possibility in remarks during Nixon's visit to the Connally ranch several weeks ago, and there are his words of his June 29 press conference indicating a disposition to increase military pressures as a means to bend North Vietnamese negotiating wills. "You get something from them only when you have something they want from you," said Mr. Nixon. All of which adds to the suspicion that Mr. Nixon's idea of negotiating is to create a military situation wherein it is possible to bully the other party into

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gaining what one wants.

The success of the Paris peace talks obviously depends upon a number of factors beyond the sincerity and seriousness of Mr. Nixon. There is also the difficult question of the intractableness of the North Vietnamese negotiators. This intractableness is, of course, much more easy to justify than the arrogance of the American position, but it does cause problems. In this context, it would be a dreadful mistake if the North Vietnamese negotiators were to mark time now and in the months ahead, in hope that Senator McGovern will win the U.S. Presidential election. Senator McGovern would undoubtedly be an infinitely more agreeable man with whom to do business. But there is no guarantee that Mr. McGovern will defeat Nixon; and, more frighteningly, there is no guarantee what a desperate Mr. Nixon will do if the election appears to be taking a turn away from him. North Vietnam's negotiating opportunities are, in fact, as great now as they perhaps will ever be. The North Vietnamese have going for them the successes of an offensive, which only the full might of American air and naval power could finally blunt; they negotiate, therefore, from definite strength. Likewise, they have the pressures of an election year working on Richard Nixon; however reluctant the Nixon disposition, there will be hard political reasons (humanitarian reasons seemingly not having much impact on the man) for Mr. Nixon to reach a settlement at Paris. The North Vietnamese would be foolhardy not to capitalize on this fact.

Success at Paris would naturally enhance the Nixon image and make Senator McGovern's election that much more difficult, but this is no reason not to desire positive results from the new resumption of the talks. Every minute the war goes on, more lives are lost, and considerations of human life must always take precedent over political factors. Besides, Vietnam could be removed tomorrow from the table of issues, and there would be plenty of grounds on which to vote against Richard Nixon.

The point of all this is that the success of the current Paris talks should be a national priority engaging the concern of all people and cooperation of both major political parties. It is not a time for indifference, least of all on the part of those who are looking ahead to a 'President' McGovern. It would be the ultimate cynicism to be willing to tolerate four more months of deaths in Vietnam on the chance of seeing a new face in the White House.

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DEMOCRATS IN MIAMI

AMERICA COMES HOME

Four years ago I stood up in the press gallery, behind Hubert H. Humphrey as he quoted the healing love prayer of St. Francis of Assisi over the political and moral shambles of the 1968 Chicago Democratic Convention. The words were oil, but they did not heal. They seemed merely *words*—words from a man who used words with so little reverence for their power that the convention would have been better off with a moment of silent prayer. As the band played "Dixie," the Stanford student next to me sat down and said he was voting for Eldridge Cleaver. The young and once hopeful of every age went home to their communities—some "radicalized," all scarred—to drift disillusioned like those mysterious wounded heroes in Hemingway, Mailer and the Civil War stories of Henry James, for a while telling their story compulsively like Ancient Mariners, then letting it eat away inside because nobody would believe.

Last week many of these same men and women arrived in Miami apprehensive and gun-shy, but anxious to give democracy one more chance to work. They clung to the belief that man controls history and can right its mistakes, that the volatile forces that in one year bring on violence can, if handled rationally, in another year, lead to constructive social change.

Chicago feared and hated the shirtless demonstrators; Miami let them sleep in Flamingo Park where its old citizens set up their camp chairs and watched them with the indulgent amusement usually reserved for precocious grandchildren. In Chicago the young McCarthy workers were clubbed in their hotel rooms and driven out into Grant Park; in Miami the college students were delegates on the convention floor or covering it for their college newspapers. In Chicago the SDS was a political force; in Miami it was an anachronism. The energies and resentments that had fueled it had been absorbed, like all American almost-revolutions, into the flexible political process. On Wednesday afternoon a few hundred "non-delegates" took over the first floor of the McGovern headquarters' Doral Beach Hotel, demanding that McGovern come down, as they swarmed through the plush ballrooms like the 1829 Jacksonian rabble in the White House—only better behaved, careful not to smoke dope in front of the media, or crack the crystal chandeliers with their Vietcong flags. My own impression of the crowd was that a good many of them were more interested in embarrassing McGovern (since he now represented the viability of "the system") than talking with him. Nevertheless, at enormous risk, just three hours away from his nomination, McGovern confronted them himself. They had a right, he said, to be heard.

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Things felt, seen and remembered. The desolate, blazingly-lit, midnight streets of Cuban Miami. The soft, hot Jewish rolls in Wolfie's deli-restaurant. The thin, little, young man at the bus stop telling me he was afraid of hippies, and that, in response to 28,000 requests, he had come from San Francisco to found a branch of the First Church of Satan. The 400 demonstrators outside the hall, listening to Allen Ginsberg chant "Ahhh" as they painted their faces to mourn the Vietnamese dead and built a 60-foot replica of a Tonkin dike. The unblushing presence of the homosexuals. The NBC cameraman asking the handsome long-haired boy on the convention floor to move the credential tags away from his chest so he could leeringly film the Gay Caucus lettering on his lavender T-shirt. George Wallace recapturing some dignity in his generally temperate (for him) talk, but spoiling it with his last line. Senator John Tunney, perpetually cruising the floor, trying to explain to a newsman that he *personally* doesn't *eat* iceberg lettuce, but, on the other hand, couldn't support a boycott because, well . . . The delegate from somewhere pleading with a nodding Tunney to deliver a most important message to someone—thinking all the while that Tunney was Lindsay. The ancient, white-suited Kentucky "Colonel Sanders," ushered over to shake hands with John Lindsay and Bob Wagner, only to be mau-maued by a black woman over his not-so "finger-lickin' good" fried chicken. The famous and the un-famous greeting one another on the floor.

Meanwhile, the delegates worked hard, spent little, drank less. Above all, they seemed to relish the political process, the open decision-making, the forging of new alliances, the occasionally giddy freedom to nominate *anyone*—including themselves—for the vice presidency, and the many magnanimous gestures, such as the Alabama delegation's unanimous vote for Eagleton. It was a crowd that could shed tears of emotion for both the opening, well-staged, flag-waving "Star Spangled Banner" and, in the closing moments, to the spontaneous welling forth of "We Shall Overcome." All this to the disappointment of Evans-Novak-Alsop who had predicted mayhem, to the confusion of Cronkite-Sevareid-Reston—slow to acknowledge the depth of the quiet revolution unfolding before them, and to the sour withdrawal of Meany-Daley who would rather carry their dreamy recollections of past power to their graves than share it with another generation.

The McGovern image is still not sharp enough for thorough analysis. His press conferences tend to resemble pulpit pronouncements and his responses seem more honest than deep, more inspired by felt convictions than carefully thought-through policies. There is little wit and less imagination, and no evidence that the "complexity" of some issues that paralyzes otherwise righteous men into eternal silence bothers him at all. And I suspect that some of the more sophisticated peace people squirm a little when he swears that the prisoners will be home within 90 days.

Some artists depict McGovern, sometimes disparagingly, in heroic or messianic garb. Yet, it seems to me, the most significant thing about McGovern is that he is *not* a messiah. There is no white horse. Unlike Roosevelt or the Kennedys he does not give his constituents (they should not be called followers) the feeling that he has come to save them. Rather, his very existence convinces them that working together they can save society themselves. While Roosevelt and the Kennedys symbolized abstract qualities like determination or courage, McGovern is not a symbol but a human experience, a concrete example of a recently doubtful principle all rational men want to believe: the American people are fundamentally decent and good; the better angels of their nature, if only given a chance, can reassume control. When Ted Kennedy addressed the convention the delegates became the New York Philharmonic and his words were Leonard Bernstein's baton crashing them through the crescendo of Beethoven's Third. When McGovern spoke the crowd was itself. His words—with all their allusions to Yeats, Ecclesiastes, Shaw, Tennyson and Woody Guthrie—were theirs, saying the simple, straightforward things they wanted to say.

In his 1971 essay, "Political Participation—a Christian View," published in *Toward a Discipline of Social Ethics* (ed. Paul Deats, Jr.; Boston University Press), McGovern points to the passage where Jesus stands up in the synagogue and reads the prophecy from Isaiah, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach the good news to the poor," as the charter and demand for the social involvement of Christians. "The response of love toward God and neighbor, in the view of most leaders of the Christian movement, requires participation in the political process." However, although the Senator may identify with the young Nazarene who, on this occasion, was almost thrown off a cliff by his fellow townsmen, he seems in some ways more in the tradition of another biblical figure, John the Baptist, the transitional prophet linking the Old and New Covenants, who calls the Nation to repent as he points toward someone greater who will follow. Here, however, McGovern points not to some greater leader—for the age of charismatic heroes is gone—but to the people themselves, their dignity, their hidden resources. At the same time, this is a craftier, more pragmatic and ambitious prophet who has no intention of ending up with his head on a plate. He is defying the law of history that says that prophets do not succeed. Yet, most likely, he would answer that he is not a prophet, not ahead of his time, but simply a good listener, a shrewd, plain and sensitive politician who can read the real heart of America and lead it back home. RAYMOND A. SCHROTH

(*Raymond A. Schroth, S.J., is assistant editor of* Commmonweal.)

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WHAT IS A LIBERAL CATHOLIC?

MICHAEL NOVAK

Early in that symbolic year, 1960, Thomas T. McAvoy wrote that "the social and religious position of Roman Catholics in the United States in this second half of the twentieth century will depend upon the natural sequence of events in the social and religious realms." *(Roman Catholicism and the American Way of Life.)* The intervening years have been full of events. The meaning of the phrase "liberal Catholic," has, indeed, changed dramatically.

What is a liberal Catholic?

For one thing, not so many formerly liberal Catholics like to be called "liberal." "Radical" is the preferred encomium.

"Father Murray's last pupils at Woodstock," writes Garry Wills, "thought his brand of liberalism simply obsolete or irrelevant." He elaborates: "Much of youth's disillusionment in the late sixties came from the discovery that liberals were only the left wing of the Establishment, and that they conceived of no position leftward of their own as legitimate. American liberalism was just not a very daring thing; and Catholic liberalism was even less venturesome than the nonreligious kinds." Garry Wills has over the years demonstrated in his writings a peculiarly ideosyncratic understanding of liberalism; and his writings show that he has passed from conservatism to radicalism without ever going through liberalism. Still, his descriptions of the decline of Woodstock (in *New York Magazine* and *Worldview)* show that he is the only writer who can rival Mailer in the brilliance, surprise and penetration of his concrete perceptions.

There are rival theories about what has happened to liberal Catholicism. One short suggestion: the discovery of sex. For celibates, of course, it has been a literal discovery but even for the enthusiastically, devoutly, liturgically married, it is a rushing sort of liberation—at just the right moment of middle age. The "revolution" is, after all, a revolution in cultural style, in sensibility, in values. It is "dionysian." It is emphatically of the body. To consciousness III, the restraints of consciousness II are a "hang-up."

The sex theory, so far found only allusively, is probably powerful and deep; so much so that jokes best relieve its tension. The extent to which the Catholic tradition depends on sexual restraint, both for good and for ill, has scarcely been examined. The voyage out of the ghetto is often sexual in symbol.

Often, however, we have imagined that sexual frankness is a privilege of the very wealthy, or at least of the educated and the artistic; it is "liberation." But the cultures of the poor have their own sexual frankness; it is "suppressed violence." The country is even beginning to feel, Wills tells us in *New York*, "a spread of diluted redneckism," including the "sexual frankness" and "earthy language" associated with George Wallace. So that lower-middle-class whites, rural and urban, are now being given their sexual due, and setting some sort of standard for the nation. "Above all," Wills writes, "the muggy atmosphere of mixed sex and violence, continual, subliminal, like a never-ending cicada screech. Wallace without the use of his lower body is like Elvis told to sing without his pelvis." And like Murray's last students at Woodstock, without their girls?

Another theory is that American Catholics who used to be liberal have at last become Protestants, not in the religious but in the cultural sense. Estimating the uses of morality in politics, they do not turn to that most central of all the questions John Courtney Murray posed, in *"The American Proposition":* "At this juncture I suggest that the immediate question is not whether the free society is really free. . . I suggest that the immediate question is whether American society is properly civil." And Murray went on to cite, not a merely aristocratic or Brahmin conception of civility, but Thomas Aquinas by way of Thomas Gilby, O.P. Rather, the new radicals turn to questions of moral purity, witness, protest, outrage, the indignation of the pure before the seemingly stupid steadiness of those with dirty hands.

Who would have thought, a decade ago, that the realism and restraint of the Catholic political tradition would have given way so swiftly to the cultural style that in every generation brings us a new Prohibition, a new struggle between Good and Evil, new tests for the nation's righteousness?

Who would have thought, a decade ago, that in adapting themselves to "the modern world," so many intelligent Catholics would have left behind their own strengths and modeled themselves upon the systems of moral outrage cultivated by that "constituency of conscience," those "principled" and "enlightened" citizens, so numerous among our educated elites?

For a long time, critics of American Catholicism—I among them—urged Catholics to stress and to develop the *American* side of their dual identity. But not without bringing to Americanness something new, something distinctive, something *Catholic*. Well, in a way, there is something distinctive about "the new Catholic Left." It is more symbolic, more romantic, more dashing, more liturgical in its protest than other groups. We all have reason to be grateful for it. It has achieved a certain Chestertonian flamboyance

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NEW CHURCH IN NEW CUBA

JAMES HIGGINS

The Cuban Catholic clergy's line of vision was cleared for confrontation with the human works of the Revolution

First of all, perhaps, it is necessary to make it clear to North Americans that neither the Catholic Church nor other churches, neither religious freedom nor religious practice, have disappeared from Cuba during its 13 years of Revolutionary administration of the construction of socialism. When I tell people in the United States that on my several visits to Cuba in recent years I have attended Mass, talked wtih young priests, held an eye-opening conversation with the Papal Nuncio, they find these reports hard to believe. It appears to be assumed that religion must necessarily have been singled out for elimination early in the game by leaders of a Revolution who base their thinking about human affairs on the analyses of Marx and Lenin and who are, in their own words, creating the material conditions for the flowering of Communist man and woman.

No, the churches are open in Cuba. (So are the seminaries.) But it is true that they are not the same kind of churches, nor are they staffed by the same kind of persons, as before Jan. 1, 1959, when the rebel forces led by Fidel Castro completed their 650-mile march across Cuba to power in Havana. From that day on, everything has changed in a country which for more than half a century had been governed by an almost unbroken sequence of undemocratic regimes and had been dominated economically by capitalist interests of the U.S. A church which had accommodated itself to this situation, whose pupils and schools had been generally employed as instruments for indulging the rich and keeping the poor quiet, could hardly have been permitted to continue in such work under circumstances which now defined it as "counter-revolutionary."

The schools and the pulpits, in short, reflected in their teachings the concerns of the privileged in Cuba, the minority class of landowners, politicians, managers, bankers, merchants, professionals, technicians and clerks, all dependent for their advantages, economic and social, upon the neo-colonial masters of Cuba, certain corporate and financial U.S. aggregates. These did not assert themselves in direct political fashion. They governed from behind the scenes. Their man in Havana was the Ambassador from the United States, one of whom, after the fall of Batista, described himself as having been the "second most important person in Cuba." His deference to the former dictator was more courtesy than fact. The U.S. Ambassador, when the chips were down, made the key Cuban decisions. Batista carried them out. They were, of course, decisions fundamentally favoring U.S. investors, not the majority of the Cuban people. And it was within this institutional system that Catholic bishops and priests, for the most part, played their religious roles.

Whatever the point of view from which the history of the Cuban Revolution is approached, it is impossible to fault its leadership on the grounds of indecision or lack of resolution. Fidel Castro's character and temperament, no doubt, have been the principal force generating this record. In any event, once it became clear that the major combat zone of the Revolution's effort to establish itself as an irrevocable process in Cuba was to be the thought center, the mass mind, of the people, the leadership made two moves to improve its strategic position: It declared that all education would henceforward be conducted in the Revolution's public schools; and it dis-

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patched priests who were not Cuban-born—substantial numbers came from Spain—back to the country of their birth.

We should not miss the nature of these moves. They were positive and nationalistic, not negatively anti-religious, although they were assuredly anti-church as the church was then constituted. National pride was, and remains, one of the elemental features of the Cuban Revolution. *Cuba for the Cubans*! Thus it seemed entirely logical to invite the only living relics of the Spanish Conquest, which had terminated politically in 1901, to go home. At the same time, the Revolutionary leadership had demonstrated almost at once, with the island-wide literacy campaign of 1960, with the surge of school-building and teacher-training programs, that it intended to make education the greatest enterprise of the new Cuba. Since the parochial schools had been in part justified, or even made necessary, by the inadequacies of the corruption-ridden pre-Revolution public education system, their social *raison d'être* had been displaced by the serious—and fulfilled—promise of universal, equal-rights education which the Cuban guerrillas had made when they were preparing the revolution in the Sierra Maestra in 1956 and 1957.

Working Within

Obviously, the departure of Spanish-born priests, and the liquidation of parochial schools, removed potentially troublesome interferences with the revolutionary process in Cuba as conceived and conducted by its leadership. But what have been the values underlying that process? What has been its content? Those questions are asked from the present perspective of the Catholic Church in Cuba, which is more and more a perspective not just of respect for the sincerity with which the Revolution's leaders have gone about the task of improving the general welfare but also—and this has incalculable significance for the future relationship of Communism and Christianity—of working within the process, of "joining any positive action aiming at man's full liberation." The quotation is from a recent interview with 43-year-old Francisco Oves, Archbishop of Havana, who described the "mission" of the church in Cuba now as, among other things, helping Christians to "assume a positive attitude towards their commitment in the construction of this new society, recognizing the human and evangelical values which converge in Christianity and Socialism. . . ."

I am reminded of a brief encounter in Havana in 1968 with Bishop Cesare Zacchi, the Vatican's representative in Cuba. I met him by chance at a reception, told him I was a North American journalist visiting Cuba for the first time and asked if it would be possible to interview him on the subjects of the Revolution. He said no, it wouldn't be possible, he was a diplomatic person and could not speak for the record on Cuba. But, he added, perhaps he could say a few words that would be helpful to me as a journalist. He then inquired as to whether I was familiar with Christian Doctrine. "I became well acquainted with it," I said, "during four high school years of study with Jesuits."

"Ah, well, then," he said, "you must remember such things as feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, housing the homeless, clothing the naked, and so forth?"

I said I remembered the Corporal Works of Mercy word for word. "In that case," said Bishop Zacchi, "you have no problem. Look around in Cuba. Then you will see what to write about when you return to your own country. That what the Revolution is doing here is the work of Christ."

There is no way of my knowing to what extent the presence in Cuba of this particular Papal Nuncio has encouraged the extraordinary developments in the association between the Revolution and the church over the past ten years. But it is likely that "his work, his prudence, his Christian intuition . . ."—the words are those of the Bishop of Cuernavaca, Mexico, who visited Cuba early this year—have been a factor in the shift of church attitude from that of 1960 to that of 1969. In 1960 the Cuban bishops formulated, and delivered to church pastors to be read at Mass, a general declaration against "Communism" which amounted, at the time, to an attack on the integrity and legitimacy of the Revolution. By 1969, however, the bishops of Cuba were directing their criticism not at the Revolution but at the "economic denial" policy of the U.S. toward Cuba, a policy which the bishops said, in calling for its abandonment, had no other purpose and effect than to impose suffering upon the Cuban people. (The only sign of U.S. acknowledgment of this appeal of which I am aware came in 1971 from Senator Edward Kennedy, who, urging a re-examination of policies toward Cuba, pointedly recommended a U.S. initiative to end the economic boycott.)

". . . I think it is evident," says Bishop Sergio Méndez Arceo of Cuernavaca, "that the Gospel is class-based where there are classes, but class-based on the poor, not on the rich. Unfortunately, the image of the church (in Cuba and the whole of Latin America) was that of an institution class-based on the rich. . . . That image is very important, because it lingers on and is very difficult to erase. Real sacrifices must be made to do it." In Cuba the Revolution thrust certain "sacrifices" upon the church: the surrender of the parochial school system, the removal of Spanish-born priests. In so doing, however, with whatever motive of advantage for the revolutionary process, the Cuban leadership provided also an opportunity for ecclesiastics to recognize what "the image of the church" had been and, to quote Pope John XXIII, "begin to return the church to the Gospel." No longer confined in classrooms with

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the sons (and sometimes the daughters) of the Catholic rich who sent their children to parochial schools; no longer outnumbered by foreign priests whose cultural heritage quite naturally disposed them to identify with the bourgeois aristocracy; the Cuban Catholic clergy's line of vision was cleared for confrontation with the human works of the Revolution.

What are these? Simply, as remarked by Bishop Méndez, "to give education and medical attention to all Cuban citizens, and to give every Cuban the right to eat, even if modestly for the moment. In my country many people cannot eat at all. I think there are no less than ten million Mexicans who live in terrible poverty." (And upwards of 150 million in Latin America.) But the word "give," as used by the Bishop of Cuernavaca, while it appropriately defines basic aims of the Revolution, falls short of suggesting the impressive fashion in which spiritual energies have been released to achieve these and other aims, all of which might be grouped under the heading of justice. In the total of six months or so which I have spent in Cuba since 1968, the sense of community, of selflessness, of cooperation, of "love

for one another," has been overwhelming. Not completely realized, to be sure, although I would say almost completely among the youth, who comprise about half of the island's eight million population. But generally speaking, the Cuban people are now characterized by the evidence of virtues which through the ages have been preached as ideals under real conditions which placed them beyond the reach of all but a few saints and heroes.

This spirit, these virtues, "love, justice, equality," (Bishop Méndez) have plainly drawn men of the church into curious and sympathetic contact with the Cuban Revolution. The formal documention lies in such statements as that of 1969 by the bishops. More casual testimony—and, perhaps for that reason, more assuring—can be found in the steady participation of young ecclesiastics, side by side with young Communists, in revolutionary tasks. Not long ago, for example, 55 seminarians from the Seminary of San Carlos of Havana cut sugar cane for a month in the fields of the Osvaldo Sanchez sugar mill of Guines in company with other workers. ". . . . I found the seminarians happy and contented," says Bishop Méndez. "I found they become men of the Revolution." He went on to say that they were among Catholics "taking part in the process of transformation, of conversion to Christianity, to discover how the Cuban Revolution—I don't say in everything, the Christian should always be critical, critical towards any human reality—is practicing Christianity in many fields. . . Certainly the new Christian man cannot be a capitalist, but he can be a socialist."

North Americans whose sentimentalities might be offended by the bluntness of the Bishop's conclusions can partake of consolation in the fact that he is speaking in a Latin American context. That continent, he says, "has no other outlet than socialism—which may be Marxist—I'm not afraid of the word. I also think that Marxism, in its scientific aspect, as an analysis of reality, is perfectly acceptable to a Christian." Strong language from a Catholic bishop. And language that probably would be unacceptable, even as a question for debate, were it not for the survival and persistence of the Cuban Revolution. It has been traditional in the church for some priests—and some superiors, including Popes—to call attention to the plight of the poor, to denounce injustice, to condemn abuses of human welfare and dignity, to exhort reform. But these expressions of genuine feeling have been temporally limited. They have not been tested, for actual validity, under the laboratory conditions of a socialist Revolution which has undertaken to cure poverty and injustice, to exalt human dignity and welfare, to replace rather than reform an exploitative system—and to invite the church to work with this revolutionary process. (The church, of course, does not get a special invitation in Cuba. Everybody is invited to participate. But not everybody has to face up to the challenge that such a Revolution poses to Catholics, no less a challenge than is contained in the questions: What does it mean to be a Catholic? What is the obligation the Gospel really places upon Catholics? What must I do to follow the example of Christ? What is the true nature of the church?)

The Cuban Education and Cultural Congress of April, 1971, a week-long discussion of ideological issues among 1800 revolutionary workers—one of the most important events in the history of the Cuban Revolution—made carefully explicit the terms of the social contract which the Revolution proposes to "religious groups." Among them are: "Complete separation of State-Church, School-Church, in all fields; No encouragement, support or help given to any religious group, or any favors asked of them; We (Cuban Communists) neither share any religious belief nor support any religious group . . .; The Revolution respects religious beliefs . . . as an individual right; The Revolution does not impose upon nor persecute nor repress anyone for religious beliefs; with socialist construction as its focus, the Revolution offers possibilities and opportunities in its work of transformation to all and

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anyone independent of whether or not they profess religious beliefs."

There were, further, in the Congress' Declaration on "Religion," a relatively short section, it must be said, of the comprehensive document issued by the participants, two specific references to the Catholic Church:

1: "The question was raised as to the church's activities among the children, its organization of sports events, festivals etc., and it was pointed out that this results from our deficiencies in this field, from our failure to use the enormous potentialities of the Revolution, which are available to the political, mass and school organizations, and from our weaknesses in ideological and political practical activities. . ."

2: ". . . it is noted that, as Marxist-Leninists and materialists, we must not follow a clumsy anti-religious line but rather that of scientific teaching, raising the cultural level of the people and placing at the disposal of our teachers the right kind of educational material for this purpose."

This is, I think, an unprecedented statement of principles for "peaceful co-existence" in a Communist-governed country between that political system and the Catholic Church. (The only comparable situation, it is interesting to note, can be found in the Communist nation with which Cuba has the closest bonds of solidarity, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.) But the principles of Church-State relationships in Cuba as spelled out by the Education and Cultural Congress—whose Declaration can be regarded as official policy—extend beyond peaceful co-existence. They affirm, at least within the framework of "activities among the children," peaceful competition. And beyond that, even peaceful cooperation—"casting ideology aside," in the phrases of John XXIII repeated by Bishop Méndez—"in common projects, the common task, the common task of creating justice."

Vatican II

References to Pope John, to the spirit of the Second Vatican Council, occur also in the Declaration of the Congress. For instance: "The concrete situation of the Catholic Church in our country was analyzed (by the Congress) in the light of the worldwide movement for its reform, the ecclesiastical hierarchy's attitude toward the revolutionary process and the role played today in our continent by the revolutionary movement in certain Catholic sectors, whose criterion is our Revolution. The trend of certain Catholic groups to separate socio-economic from philosophic problems—which makes possible and even stimulates individual contributions in activities connected with the Revolution's economic construction—together with our policy of welcoming everybody's participation in revolutionary work, opens the door to them."

True enough, up to a point. But what might be the effect upon church theory—that is to say, philosophy and theology—of the experience of revolutionary practice in the construction of Communism in Cuba? The confluence there of two intense and historic movements, one secular, one ecclesiastical, projects the possibility of an integration of corporal and spiritual works which can hardly help but compel Catholic thinkers toward profound consideration, re-consideration, of the ideas about mankind, about the world, on which the church has long supported itself. "We have our truths here in Cuba," said Fidel Castro in 1968, "which arose from our experience, applicable to our conditions, and we have our conclusions." Part of that experience, however significant it is not possible to say, was Catholic formation. Fidel and other leaders of the Cuban Revolution, as young men and women, were taught in Catholic schools. Much of the training, as I have heard Fidel say, was harsh, dry, stultifying and negative. It promoted passivity, the acceptance of misery and pain as the ordained human lot; and it held out the promise of heavenly reward as the prize for those who concentrated on individual salvation and shut their eyes to the reality of the anguish around them in the Cuban people.

Nevertheless, the efforts of Catholic teachers to conceal the disturbing import of the Gospel from their wards have not always been successful. Rebels have appeared, inside and outside the church. If not inspired by the Gospel, then, in any event, acting objectively in consonance with its messages. Somehow or other, let us say, the "conclusions" to which the Catholic-instructed Fidel and his comrades eventually arrived, after their journey through "experience, applicable to our conditions," are the conclusions of Communism. And now these conclusions are being posed, in actuality, to the church, to Catholics, not only in Cuba and Latin America but everywhere. More than that. The response to date of what Fidel calls "the revolutionary movement developing within the Catholic clergy in Latin America" poses its own conclusions to Marxism, which needs, Fidel says, "to break away from a certain rigidity, from dogma." He goes on:

"These are the paradoxes of history. How, seeing sectors of the clergy becoming revolutionary forces, can we resign ourselves to seeing revolutionary forces becoming ecclesiastical forces?" His words imply not an arrangement, an accommodation, between Communism and Christianity, but rather an inter-active association the workings of which are presently operative in the Cuban model. It is regrettable, to say the least, that North American Catholics are generally unaware of the existence of this model, and are prevented from learning much about it, or studying it on the scene, by what Sen. Kennedy describes as "an outdated and unrealistic U.S. policy toward Cuba."

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THE CASE FOR DIVIDING 'JUSTICE'

ISIDORE SILVER

No President needs his own law enforcement machinery, for the temptation to pervert such machinery to partisan political ends is often overwhelming

The depredations of Richard Nixon's Justice Department as chronicled by Richard Harris in *Justice* and *Decision*, and as augmented by the Kent State (where no grand jury was impaneled by John Mitchell despite substantial evidence that some National Guardsmen committed federal crimes), Berrigan, and ITT affairs, have starkly raised the issue of whether it is healthy in a democracy to combine "law enforcement" and "politics" in a powerful federal prosecutor's office. The conduct of that office by Mitchell and many of his predecessors depressingly demonstrates the validity of Justice Robert H. Jackson's dictum that "The prosecutor has more control over life, liberty and reputation than any other person in America" (ironically, Jackson himself was a former Attorney-General). While many fret about the appointment of a "non-political" F.B.I. Director to replace J. Edgar Hoover, we overlook the more serious—and continuous and continuing—"politicization" of the most potentially dangerous function of all, the prosecutorial. That problem, though rooted in some deeply felt cultural and legal assumptions, should no longer be ignored—and for the public weal, it *can* no longer be ignored.

Presently and historically, political officials (whether elected ones, such as local district attorneys or appointed ones such as the Attorney-General of the United States) both create and flexibly execute law enforcement policy on every level of government. The head of the Justice Department may be a thief like Harry Daugherty of Teapot Dome fame, a thoroughly experienced bond lawyer à la John Mitchell, a political hack (the list is too long and depressing to recite here), or an unproven and unknown type on the order of a Robert Kennedy. Of course, he may be someone of brilliance, experience and integrity: Ramsey Clark, Francis Biddle or Jackson himself immediately come to mind. Occasionally, like Kennedy, he may turn out to be a surprise. But, it is all fortuitous and totally dependent upon the judgment (or is it whim?) of one man, the President (only rarely questioned by a normally acquiescent Senate).

Although we do not ordinarily think so, there is a vast conceptual and functional difference between the operations of an ordinary Cabinet department and those of the Department of Justice. That distinction justifies Congressional acquiescence to appointments to the former and close scrutiny of the personnel and operations of the latter. The "law" is not the policy prerogative of the President; it is the culmination of a solemn and substantial commitment of both Congress and the Executive to relatively permanent (certainly not politically transient) principles of culpability. Laws are not—or should not be—passed as an exercise of purely political policy and are generally supposed to reflect long-run policy determinations about which reasonable national consensus exists. In contrast, the commercial, labor, and foreign policies of the United States are—and should be—responsive to immediate pressures and we presumably elect Presidents and other public officials to carry out both short- as well as long-term mandates. Also, the potential for infliction of personal harm residing generally in Cabinet departments is substantially diminished in contrast to that in the daily operations of a prosecutorial agency such as the Justice Department.

The Role of Discretion

The handmaiden of "politicization" is discretion. Much prosecutorial discretion is inevitable, indeed inherent in the very nature of law enforcement in a democratic society. As the leading analysis of a prosecutorial function concludes, it is permissible to consider "the prevailing sentiment in the community" and to be directly responsive to community attitudes. Even legislatures which decree our criminal laws often do not expect full official compliance: "[F]ull enforcement apart from [considerations of manpower] resource limitation is not consistent with legislative expectation in some situations." Because of this, no feasible institutional restraints upon such discretion have ever been devised or implemented. As one authority says, "Even the limited efforts to restrict prosecutorial power to discontinue prosecution once begun have been criticized . . . and have rarely been utilized."

Given the reality of prosecutorial discretion, the argument for dividing the function of the Department of Justice into two becomes compelling. There is an obvious necessity for the President to have an office of legal advice—perhaps at the Cabinet level—and, insofar as that office can furnish advice concerning proposed legis-

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Daniel Ellsberg

. . . . Most public political actions, whatever their virtues and vices, however effective or moving, however they feel from the inside, are, when seen from the outside, necessarily rather inexpressive of the people who take part in them. In a picket line, a demonstration crowd, or a riotous confrontation, one is playing a role, "standing up to be counted," *literally* to be counted, to become a number in a police estimate. . . .

More expressive are actions which reveal both oppression and the self-affirming commitment of people to change the situation: sit-ins, freedom rides, strikes, occupations of buildings. Here the act is directly demonstrative of one's experience and demands: the black students assert their right to sit at a lunch counter by sitting at a lunch counter; people who live in slums assert their right to decent housing by squatting in unoccupied buildings. But both kinds of actions are joined by a sense of *innocence*: one knows one has been a victim, or at worst a passive bystander, but in any case one has been more acted upon than acting; one has not committed a concrete crime. . . .

The new heroism begins in undeniable complicity. There is nothing abstract about the complicity of Ellsberg or a Vietnam vet, especially one who has committed war crimes or been in a position to try to prevent them; it is embedded in acts of commission, not omission; it is not conjured up; it requires no psychoanalysis to be uncovered. The new heroism consists in conspicuously throwing one's own complicity back in the face of power, and thereby struggling to free oneself of it; I say "struggling" because I doubt this liberation comes with a single act however dramatic. The act is a direct, unmistakable rejection of one's past participation in evil. . . .

—From *Ellsberg and the New Heroism*
by Todd Gitlin
Commonweal, September 3, 1971

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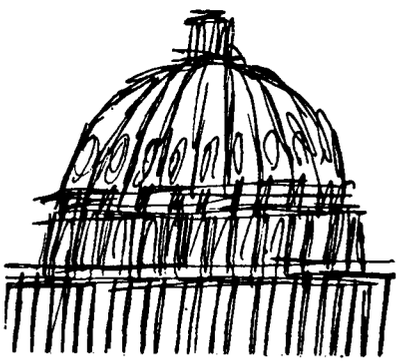
lation, it is manifestly a position which should be recognized and represented. But no President needs his own law enforcement machinery, for the temptation to pervert such machinery to partisan political ends is, of course, often overwhelming. The same arguments favoring separation of the intelligence operations of the F.B.I. and the C.I.A. from their operations are applicable here. No one agency should be responsible for both functions, for each tends to distort the objectives of the other.

Thus, if the Department of Justice were split into two agencies, one representing the President as legal policy-maker, the other relatively independent of the President as law-enforcer, some necessary "breathing space" would be afforded to a system often besmirched by politics. A Cabinet appointment to the Department of Law (Secretary of Law, let us call this position) would be made and approved routinely; an appointment of the Attorney-General to supervise the Department of Justice would, on the other hand, undergo the same Senatorial scrutiny that normally attends the selection of Supreme Court Justices. Presumably, for the latter, informal guidelines could be drawn up; for instance, it would not be in-



appropriate for the Attorney-General to be either an eminent law professor or law school dean.

There is at least one startling—though often overlooked—precedent for a proposal of this magnitude. In fact, what I am suggesting is, in reality, an extension of the concept and function of the position of Solicitor-General to encompass the operations of the entire federal prosecutorial establishment. As readers of Victor Navasky's *Kennedy Justice* already know, the relationship between the politically appointed Attorney-General and his ostensible subordinate, the Solicitor-General, is complex indeed. The Solicitor's office is that branch of the Department of Justice charged with presenting the government's side in litigation before the Supreme Court. Occasionally, where the Solicitor believes that the government's position in an important case is wrong, flagrantly wrong, he will refuse to argue it or, almost equally disdainfully, will assign a new member of his specialized office to prepare and present it. This is a signal to the Supreme Court that the government is in trouble.

Commonly, the Solicitor is a prestigious dean or law

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professor, and he is expected to guide the Supreme Court as well as please his superior at Justice. Thus, there is a strong tradition of impartiality at that level of Justice (used both with and without capitals). An extension of that tradition to the office of the Attorney-General itself should be natural and not particularly controversial. Of course there are delicate policy considerations in determining whether crimes exist and whether they (or, more important, their perpetrators) should be prosecuted, and these are exceedingly difficult to define. For instance, the judicious prosecutor must weigh general public opinion about the nature of the crime and must assess the relationship between harm to the particular suspect and the perceived benefit of prosecution to society. Judges' attitudes, and the question of overcommitment of scarce law enforcement resources constitute but a few other factors even a conscientious prosecutor must take into account when determining his policies. These matters cannot be controlled by others and must ultimately be resolved somewhere—and there is nothing wrong with vesting the authority where it presently lies, provided that the country has, at least, a reasonable opportunity to obtain the services of a wise, dedicated, essentially apolitical Attorney-General and staff.

Will the mythical law professor or dean be a Platonic Guardian of the sacred tomb of the Law? Of course not, but, then again, neither will he be a political hack or vengeful partisan. He will have broad flexibility to determine prosecutorial priorities, and doubtlessly will bring some bad cases and omit to bring good ones. The point is that he will do it less often than has occurred and his motives will not be questioned. Although he is a Presidential appointee, he will not be beholden to the President for he has other jobs, other distinctions to which he can repair. If a tradition of excellence results—as has already happened at the Solicitor-General's level—then the nation will be better for it. What is necessary is that the Attorney-General's office be insulated from partisan politics as much as possible, that the crushing yet educative power of the law not be used to exonerate the guilty or to intimidate the innocent, that a President seeking, in Jackson's words, to "select some group of unpopular persons" to prosecute be confronted at the highest—and most visible—public level by an Ombudsman, in this case an Ombudsman for the law—and incidentally for all of us.

Summer Schedule

In keeping with the usual practice, *Commonweal* is again appearing on alternate weeks during the summer months. Forthcoming issues will be dated August 11, August 25, September 8, and September 22. From then on we will resume our normal weekly publishing schedule.

MOVIE-OF-THE-MONTH-CLUB SELECTIONS

THE SCREEN

Now Alexander Portnoy really has something to complain about because what his mother did to him is nothing compared to what Ernest Lehman has done. Mr. Lehman has taken Philip Roth's dirty novel and turned it into a love story. The reason seems to be that Lehman, unlike Roth, has a few inhibitions left, which might not be bad, except that Lehman hasn't feared being gross so much as ruining the gross of the film. On the other hand, though, adapter-director Lehman ought to be given some consideration. For one thing, he's hampered by his belief that the opposite sex from a woman is a Jew. Even Dr. Spielvogel probably wouldn't have made that mistake. For another thing, nobody could make *Portnoy's Complaint* into a good movie. Perhaps Lehman is just one of those men—Pres. Thieu would be another—who will take on any job, no matter how doomed to failure, as long as there's money and celebrity in it.

In Roth's novel we're not embarrassed by Alex's Monkeyshines because Alex isn't. We might be shocked or disgusted, or at least a bit hesitant, if someone else were; but no one in the book is. This makes reading about Alex and Monkey seem healthy in paradoxical spite of the fact that they are obviously sick. Of course the one whose forthrightness counts most is Roth's. We are flattered by his assumption that he can tell us about Alex and Monkey without dissembling or circumspection, just the way they themselves go at it from the moment they meet. We enjoy the novel (and enjoy enjoying it) because it makes us feel liberated and culturally grown-up to be amused at such kinky sex.

But we are undoubtedly ready to read about some things that we are not ready to see. Sensing this, Lehman has shown us very little sex in the film, as if demurring would solve his problem. It doesn't, any more than not demurring would have. When Alex (Richard Benjamin) turns toward us open-flied, Lehman maneuvers a chair between him and the camera. When he performs cunnilingus on Monkey (Karen Black), the camera stays on her face instead of his. In their way these camera set-ups are just as bad as the hard-core alternatives. By exercising so much discretion, Lehman has, as it were, hesitated, and thus, as the saying warns, all is lost. His direction admits that there are things we could be shocked by, and this admission ruins the enjoyable illusion that we are liberated. Lehman has spoiled our fun by showing us that our moral sophistication had rather narrow aesthetic limits.

It must become tiresome hearing some over-read movie

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critic complain because this or that film isn't as good as the book on which it is based. But the more distinctive a novel is, the harder it is to adapt to the screen. The episodes of a good novel don't have much life of their own: they aren't significant in and of themselves, but only on account of the language in which they've been told. The movie can retain the dialogue from the book, of course, but not the narration. A director takes on an unpromising task when he tries to film a novel whose main appeal is in its narrative language and tone. This is what went wrong in Kubrick's *A Clockwork Orange* and in Lehman's *Portnoy's Complaint* too. And it ought to be what goes wrong with *Slaughter-House Five*, which loses on the screen Kurt Vonnegut's special brand of prose insanity.

Yet the loss to *Slaughter-House Five* isn't all that damaging. At least, it's not as noticeable as one might have expected. The credit for this must really be given to Vonnegut himself, for while scriptwriter Stephen Geller and director George Roy Hill have been respectful of the novel, they couldn't have preserved the Vonnegut in it without Vonnegut's help. Vonnegut has given the novel a point of view strong enough to stand on its own when, as in the film, there is no longer a viewer—no longer a Vonnegut to tell the story in his own, particular words. The novel accomplishes this by objectifying its point of view on a remote planet called Trafalmadore. There no one is foolish enough to believe in free will or linear notions of time: to Trafalmadorians the history of the universe is just "a collection of moments strung together at random," and they see the future with as little amazement as they do the past or present.

In both the novel and the film, the Trafalmadorians kidnap Billy Pilgrim (Michael Sacks) in order to have someone to mate with their other earth specimen, movie star Montana Wildhack (Valerie Perrine). One of the effects that this has on Billy is that he becomes "unstuck in time." He begins jumping spastically back and forth between his experiences as a World-War II P.O.W. and his later life as an optometrist in Ilium, N.Y. Vonnegut seems to be a thorough-going Trafalmadorian himself. By including the planet in his novel, and letting its influence scramble Billy's life, the author imbeds his point of view in the very structure of the story. That way no film adaptation could have cut him out altogether even if the filmmakers had wanted to.

If you think I'm giving Vonnegut too much credit for what's good in the film, consider one of the gratuitous changes Geller and Hill have made in the original story. In the novel a P.O.W. buddy of Billy's finds a teapot in the rubble after the bombing of Dresden, and is arbitrarily shot for "looting." But in the film Geller and Hill have transformed the teapot into a Dresden china figurine, the mate of one that the buddy had owned years ago and told Billy about. So significant a coincidence could hardly be more out of place in Vonnegut's story. Between the astro-logos of Trafalmadore and the firebombing of Dresden, which Billy happens to survive, no action seems rational in Vonnegut's universe. No accident can make sense. The point Vonnegut is always making is that events are pointless. They are related to each other in his books as randomly as the catch phrases and limericks that he brings into his prose by free-associating as he writes.

The irony in Vonnegut's coincidences is funny because it's absolutely dead-pan. But the Geller-Hill improvisation on the teapot has been made with a melancholy smile flickering at the corners of the mouth. The filmmaker's irony is misty-eyed and thick-voiced: it's the old zinger thrown at us amidst the hail of Vonnegut's poisoned barbs. That Geller and Hill have done so well by Vonnegut is amazing, considering what old softies they sometimes show themselves to be.

COLIN L. WESTERBECK, JR.

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DOROTHY DONNELLY

FLOWERFALL

One petal falls, and the whole
of the peony's globe is broken,
its garnet split open.

A dense sphere, as full
of itself as the taut, autumnal
orb of the apple,

this pent-in, close-packed flower
shatters like a live coal and scatters
a Perseid shower.

It flickers, flashes, expires,
heaping, then lighting its pyre
with its own red fire.

Things brim with being, and fall:
the cone from the pine; the apple;
the peony, petal

by petal. Like an old star
ripe with light to the core,
they can hold no more.

The rim reached, as with wells
at the flood, the flower's cup fills,
runs over, and spills.

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THE POLITICAL THOUGHT OF MULFORD SIBLEY

MICHAEL TRUE

Like Gandhi and unlike the anarchists, Sibley sees maintenance of the state as compatible with the pacifist ethic

"EVERY PACIFIST is implicitly either an anarchist, or a socialist, or a communist," Mulford Sibley wrote in 1943. In the three decades since then, his essays, books and pamphlets have explored this thesis, among others, giving us the most useful body of writings on the politics of pacifism since Gandhi.

In the meantime, Mulford Sibley has maintained an active, even famous, career as a teacher of political science and as a faithful worker in the Movement; although not often mentioned as a "Movement heavy," he has long lived a radical vocation as contributing editor to *Liberation*, as a defense fund-raiser and supporter of draft-resisters, as a working member of the American Friends Service Committee, and more recently as adviser to the Martin Luther King Institute of Nonviolent Social Change in Atlanta.

Born in Marston, Missouri, on June 14, 1912, Sibley grew up in Oklahoma, graduating from Central State College, Edmond, and the university, in Norman, in the mid-thirties, before taking a doctorate in political science at Minnesota in 1938. After teaching for ten years at the University of Illinois, he returned to the Minneapolis campus.

In the upper Midwest, Sibley is something of a legend, as a teacher, a prominent civil libertarian, and former chairman of the Socialist Party in the Twin Cities. His debate with a St. Paul alderman five years ago over the question of who should or should not be allowed to espouse what causes on the state university campus was broadcast through the Midwest; it raised the issue among the general public of the relationship between the university and the community in a profound and practical way.

Sibley has long been an extremely popular teacher, even among those not particularly sympathetic to his political (pacifist and socialist) position. His tall, lanky figure has become almost as much of an institution as the Mississippi River that cuts through the Minneapolis campus. He teaches seminars in Plato and Marx, general courses in Medieval Political Thought and Political Theory, and serves as adviser in the graduate program in American Studies. Although not widely known on the east and west coasts, he has taught at Cornell and Stanford, in several New York universities, and has lectured throughout New England in recent years.

As a lecturer, Sibley is more relaxed than he is as a writer, where he frequently refers to himself as "the author" or as the papal, "we," rather than simply as "I."

Although the present discussion will concentrate on two recent pamphlets, his other important publications should be mentioned also, particularly his study of conscientious objectors during World War II: *Conscription of Conscience*, with Philip E. Jacob (1952); *Social Science: Personality, Work, Community* (3rd ed., 1961); *Unilateral Initiatives and Disarmament* (1962); *The Quiet Battle: Writings on the Theory and Practice of Non-Violent Resistance* (1963). New work in progress includes a history of political thought and *Sitnalta*, a utopian story (he believes strongly in the social value of utopian literature as a way of identifying and clarifying political ideals).

The significance and originality of Sibley's political thought are best suggested by two recent essays: one a slightly revised version of a pamphlet published originally in 1944 and called *The Political Theories of Modern Pacifism: An Analysis and Criticism* (Pacifist Research Bureau, 1201 Chestnut St., Philadelphia 7, Pa.) and the second a small book, *The Obligation to Disobey: Conscience and the Law* (Special Studies #209, The Council on Religion and International Affairs, 170 East 64th St., New York, N. Y. 10021).

The Political Theories of Modern Pacifism contains both a summary of modern pacifist thought and a critique of its major arguments "insofar as they relate themselves to the world of politics."

It describes the philosophical bases of Hindu pacifism, Christian pacifism, and the pacifism of the secular revolutionary movements of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and then evaluates five "main currents" or propositions that all pacifist theories hold in common: I. That violence hinders the achievement of a democratic and peaceful order; II. That modern states are built on violence and only revolution can effect a pacifist order; III. That this revolution must develop and employ a technique embodying a nonviolent ethic; IV. That decentralization in politics and in the economic order is sought; and V. That the ideology of non-violence has a direct relevance to politics.

Each of these tenets is fully explored and its relevance to political theory and modern practice is established; the last two tenets, particularly, provide modern pacifist thought with its greatest challenge, if, that is, pacifism is to deal with questions that go beyond personal witness.

Any social and political philosophy (including pacifism) that aims at peace and harmony, he says, must speak to four principal—and sometimes uniquely

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modern—problems: the centralization of power; violence; means and ends in politics; and the uses of property.

In showing how pacifism can speak to these major concerns, Sibley prefers Gandhi's theory of politics to that of the Christian anarchists, secularists, or various utopians of the last two centuries—particularly in reference to the State. "While the pacifist is right in protesting against the swallowing up of the individual personality by the Leviathan State," overemphasis on decentralization and agrarianism raises problems, too, he says. "A world in which the binding tie of political cohesion is practically severed would be a poor setting for social harmony and non-violence."

Like Gandhi and unlike the anarchists, Sibley sees maintenance of the State as compatible with the pacifist ethic, and he argues against those, such as the late Reinhold Niebuhr, who dismiss pacifism as having no direct relevance to modern politics. It may, in fact, be "the only context in which to discover the road to a new polity." "In this respect Hindu and secular revolutionary pacifism are far more penetrating than most emphases of Christian pacifism." Gandhi, for example, whose political theory involved a philosophy of history, a doctrine of the ideal State, as well as a theory of revolution, saw that in any mass action previous agreement is essential, "if the power of the State is to be effectively challenged."

It is against this background—providing a theoretical basis for a new politics based upon non-violence—that Sibley's later work must be seen. And in *The Obligation to Disobey: Conscience and the Law* he indicates how fully he understands the problems of power, authority, and violence—concepts that Hannah Arendt, among others, has shown *must* be clarified if one is to deal with the crucial issue, in politics, of Who Rules Whom?

The Obligation to Disobey begins with a definition of conscience, seeing it, in the light of the history of moral law, as both social and individual, both rational and "beyond reason." Refining and developing the doctrine of non-violent resistance, Sibley raises questions about spheres of authority and various justifications for dissent and disobedience. He outlines principles which might guide a man (citizen or administrator) who seeks to determine his obligation to obey or to disobey law—who, for whom, for what purpose—making a distinction between civil disobedience (which implies respect for law) and revolutionary disobedience (when one feels that the whole political and legal system must be repudiated). Thus he says in the Introduction, "Law confronts conscience, yet itself represents a kind of conscience. . . . The person stands over against State and society, but is himself some kind of an outpost of State and society." In deciding what must be done, the individual, then, weighs the role of law

in human affairs, neither idolizing it not being contemptuous of it

Deciding to be disobedient in order to preserve his own integrity, to bring about social reform, or to shock the power structure, a man may act individually or en masse; in either case, he should consider the range of possibilities and responsibilities confronting him: 1. the problem of provoking violence, even though his own act is non-violent (particularly as in the Civil Rights movement, in the South, where others have to face the unleashed violence, later); 2. the need for discipline (as in large-scale civil disobedience, such as that in Worcester, in 1970, in Washington or Boston last May); 3. the question of when revolutionary, as opposed to civil, disobedience is called for (Daniel Berrigan's decision to go underground, for example, would be "revolutionary" in this sense). In "revolutionary" situations, "one might presumably be evasive in carrying out resistance"—illegal demonstrations, tax-refusal, boycotts, rejection of military service, escaping the country, hiding political prisoners (Jews in Germany in World War II, for example), exposing secret government war agreements; still "if the argument of the text has validity, one would not kill persons."

In considering various sides of the question of disobedience, Sibley calls upon a fund of knowledge of past non-violence resistance—some from his earlier book, *The Quiet Battle*, and some from recent history. Each argument, in this way, is substantiated by example. As in all previous writings, he continues to insist upon both the need for revoluton and the essential means, non-violence.

Here, as in "Revolution and Violence," Sibley recognizes the hazards that will continue to make the application of pacifist principles difficult "in a world that is more violent and less free," than it was thirty years ago: "In attempting to make his ends and his means compatible with each other, the pacifist is both a revolutionary and a political realist. Only radical social reconstruction can provide a framework which will encourage respect for human personality. But peace cannot be attained by war, and reverence for human beings will not be advanced by methods deliberately meant to kill and maim them. . . . Only when radicals emancipate themselves from the fatal fascination which violence still apparently has for them can they become leaders in the cause of equalitarian revolution."

As political theory, *The Politics of Pacifism* and *The Obligation to Disobey* deserve serious study among all those who work now for fundamental social change. As scholar, teacher and "quiet battler" in his own right, Sibley has helped lay the groundwork for a radical culture in the United States—as well as for a new conception of the relationship between life and thought in the larger culture.

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THE VALUE OF A POUND

TIMOTHY MATERER

What is modern literature? The great works of Ezra Pound, James Joyce, and T. S. Eliot are in a past marked off by World War II and the advent of atomic power. Our own times differ so radically from the inter-war years that we now have the perspective to characterize the age that nurtured works like *The Cantos, Ulysses,* and *The Waste Land.* Recent books like Irving Howe's *Literary Modernism.* Ihab Hassan's *The Dismemberment of Orpheus,* and Monroe Spear's *Dionysus and the City* have tried to tell us what is "modern" about modern literature.

Useful as these books are, there is something a bit depressing about them. Writers who in our century sometimes enraged and sometimes liberated their readers are neatly classified and compared one with another. (Spears, for example, tells us that modern writers communicate four different kinds of "discontinuities.") Reading these books, one feels that the modern writers have suffered too soon the fate of the classics: to be studied carefully rather than read excitedly.

Hugh Kenner's *The Pound Era* will not induce such a depressing side effect. It characterizes modern literature without crushing the major works themselves under a weighty thesis. Two qualities of this book keep its subject alive. The first is a style brilliantly suited to its subject. The second is that it characterizes the age through its portrait of Ezra Pound. The fascination of Pound's life fleshes out Kenner's most abstruse theories about literary modernism. And not only Pound lives in these pages. James Joyce, Gaudier-Brzeska, T. S. Eliot, and Wyndham Lewis—all contributors to what Pound called the "vortex" of modern thought—are here both as champions of seminal ideas and as great personalities. T. S. Eliot the Critic deliberating over a selection of cheeses will stay in your mind. So will Wyndham Lewis, blind, near death, his unfinished paintings in a locked studio, about to be pushed from his home by urban renewal.

Kenner's style takes getting used to, but it is essential to the life of the book. Vivid portraits and unconventional theories appear together without immediately revealing what unifies them. Consider the first three pages of the book. Semi-dramatically, we are presented with Henry James, "lord of decorum, *en promenade,* exposing his Boston niece to the tone of things." James meets the young poet Ezra Pound and his wife Dorothy on a Chelsea street. Of the ensuing conversation, history records one sentence. The Master asked concerning Pound's wife: "And is she a compatriot?" (James may or may not have worn a red weskit on this occasion.) Then we jump to a page-long section which considers the fragmentary nature of a text by the Greek poet Sappho.

The Pound Era
HUGH KENNER
U. of California Press, $14.95

The Waste Land, A Facsimile
T. S. ELIOT
Harcourt, Brace, $22.50

The Pound Era is a series of such juxtapositions, and in themselves they alert us to Kenner's major thesis about modernism: its foundation is an "aesthetic of glimpses." Thanks to James' influence and a classical education, Pound saw that the past consists of random facts and scenes which are meaningful only when we catch their tone and recreate their significance. Pound wrote in 1911 that the "New Method in Scholarship" was "the method of Luminous Detail," a detail which grants "a sudden insight into circumjacent conditions . . . into sequence, into law." Kenner's opening pages give us such a detail: James introducing someone to the European "tone," raising an essential concern of his fiction when he asks whether Dorothy Pound is British or American.

From "Luminous Details" we move to "Patterned Integrities," and reach the heart of Kenner's insight into modernism. Pound's *Cantos,* like Kenner's *Pound Era,* accumulates these luminous details in order to inform and enlighten its readers. That the Renaissance Italian strongman Malatesta could make war while simultaneously building a great church, that Thomas Jefferson tried to find a gardener who could double as a musician, and that the Chinese emperor Tching Tang found the art of good government in the maxim, Make it New, are all luminous details. As we note these details, we can grasp the pattern behind them. All three men possessed a similar kind of creative energy. In 1913, Pound wrote that what "matters in art is a sort of energy, something more or less like electricity or radio-activity, a force transfusing. welding, and unifying." Pound sought this energy not only in art. He believed that reality manifests itself through energies of varying intensities. "Niels Bohr," Kenner writes, "like Picasso was a student of metamorphoses. Matter, thought Bohr's generation of physicists, is energy tied into self-interfering patterns. . . ." When the pattern changes, so does the form. *The Cantos* traces such metamorphoses: certain ideas and kinds of men recur under different forms. They are "patterned integrities" that cohere as a knot coheres by the "self-interfering pattern" tied into a rope.

All this sounds self-consciously "new." But it involves a special way of

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looking at the past. For Ezra Pound as for Joyce, one of the major patterns revealed by his art was set in Homeric times. In *Ulysses,* Joyce drew Leopold Bloom "through a patterned integrity defined by Homer: a tough self-interfering pattern through which, he discerned, Shakespeare had already drawn the skein called Hamlet (Telemachus, Stephen). . . . Time, place and personnel alter; the pattern remains." And Ulysses, both thinker and man of action, sets the pattern that defines Malatesta, Jefferson, Tang, and maybe even Ezra Pound himself.

Perhaps works of art in any age invoke such patterns (Shakespeare's Hamlet calls up Homer's Telemachus), but not with the calculation of modern works. Pound's *Cantos* are specifically about the metamorphoses, the recurring energies, that reveal the Ulysses pattern in Malatesta or Jefferson. In Canto I, Pound makes the Ulysses persona new as he translates, in an idiom inspired by an Anglo-Saxon lyric, a Latin version of the Odyssean descent into the underworld. The subject is Ulysses learning from the dead as Pound shows what he himself has learned from his Greek, Latin, and Anglo-Saxon sources. The classic description of this poetic technique is Eliot's in his *Tradition and the Individual Talent* (1919). He says that the poet must write "with a feeling that the whole of the literature of Europe from Homer and within it the whole of the literature of his own country has a simultaneous existence and composes a simultaneous order."

Both the *Pound Era* and the *Waste Land Facsimile* are tributes to Pound's energy. When Eliot sent John Quinn the *Waste Land* manuscript, he wrote that it should be preserved "solely for the reason that it is the only evidence of the difference which [Pound's] criticism has made to this poem." *The Pound Era* helps us appreciate the aesthetic affinity between the two poets that inspired Pound's editing. Anyone with Pound's intelligence might have suggested that many small improvements in diction and phrasing, or grasped the importance of Madame Sosostris' tarot prediction, or criticized the trivial satire. But only a poet practicing an "aesthetic of glimpses" could have looked at the four manuscript pages of "Death by Water" and suggested cutting all but the last few lines. As we read it now, the excised description of a disastrous sea voyage seems like excellent poetry. In its presentation of a clearly developed narrative, it might appear a welcome relaxation of the poem's tension or muting of its dazzling imagery. But Pound saw that these lines would dissipate the poem's concentrated energy. If Kenner's book does not convince us, the *Waste Land* facsimile should, that literary modernism is fairly summed up in the phrase, The Pound Era.

The Cantos

EZRA POUND

New Directions, $12

RICHARD KOSTELANETZ

Here it is finally, all *The Cantos,* literally fifty-five years in the making—802 pages, with 154 pages of Cantos not included in the earlier retrospective (1956) and 28 pages of Cantos, numbered 110-117, not collected before. The dust-jacket is much cheesier than its predecessor, the paper only less so. Everything has been comprehensively repaginated, thankfully eliminating the clumsy successive paginations of the earlier collected edition; but the Cantos that would be numbered 72 and 73 (and reportedly drafted in Italian) are still missing. The errata prefacing the earlier collected edition have been incorporated into the book; but on p. 471 the text still reads "f . . . . n'." (Also included, without any explanation, is an "Addendum for Canto C" that hysterically attacks usury.)

These latest Cantos are less extreme, less obscure, and ultimately less interesting than their immediate predecessors, the *Thrones* (1959) composed at St. Elizabeth's prison-hospital; and at interludes these new sections are almost lyrical: "That I/lost my center/Fighting the world," reads the book's final page, its own bottom line becoming perhaps the work's definitive terminus: "To be men not destroyers," Conceptually and stylistically, these late Cantos represent an extension of Pound's earlier poetry, rather than, like Stravinsky's late compositions, a personal metamorphosis into a genuine stylistic breakthrough. It is nonetheless appropriate that at the dock of both poetry and life Pound should have survived his own more cautious contemporaries (Eliot, Stevens, even Williams) in more ways than one.

The technique of the *Cantos* is derived fundamentally from collage (itself the most extraordinary compositional innovation of the early twentieth century), in which an abundance and variety of both experiential and linguistic materials are pulled together into a poetically integral whole. Even where striking images are evoked, therefore, their structural principle is unfamiliar juxtaposition. The stance haughty, the perspective impersonal, the vision all-encompassing, the voices various, the syntax more notational and associational than linear or syllogistic, the rhythm irregular, the metaphors elaborate, the observations condensed, the diction quite formal, the relation between the parts elliptical, and the sensibility awesomely erudite. Avoiding at all costs the slickness of Victorian verse, the *Cantos* continually flirt with sheer incoherence (and Pound himself has admitted that certain earlier sections now strike him as inscrutable); and it is this characteristic, more than any other (including Pound's nutty politics), that produced this cutting paradox: For all of Pound's influence upon the profession of poetry, his work has scarcely affected the general public, although certain attitudes and linguistic devices have passed through lesser poets to the larger audience. (Some of this circuitous intellectual influence has been lamentable, because neither Pound's thought nor his poetry are especially wise.)

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A rereading of the *Cantos* today makes increasingly clear how close Williams and Eliot finally are to each other, despite their lifelong enmity, and then how much of post-WW II American poetry is indebted to Pound—not only the post-Black Mountain cabal, but even the "New York school" with its cultivated interest in poetic acoherence: and it is appropriate perhaps that the most sophisticated new anthology of post-1910 U.S. poetry, Hayden Carruth's *The Voice That Is Great Within Us* (Bantam, $1.95) should be dedicated to Pound. Poetry magazines are still founded in the Poundian mold, such as *Stony Brook,* begun in 1968, by young George Quasha, who had, according to Noel Stock's recent biography (Pantheon, $10.00), an audience with the master in New York that year, and whose first issue opened with a new Canto. (It has been all but slavishly amenable to post-Poundians, abetted by Stony Brook colleagues, ever since.) That recent revolution in pop-song lyrics, away from slick couplets to a freer verse, can also be traced partially to Pound. On higher poetic levels, his influence particularly persists in nearly every recent long poem in English, especially those that similarly aim to represent "an intellectual diary"; for rare is the contemporary poet who can write more than twenty pages without appropriating Poundian compositional devices: For examples, such free-ranging, open-ended collages of all kinds of voices and material as William Carlos Williams' *Paterson*, Louis Zukofsky's *A*, Charles Olson's *Maximus Poems,* John Cage's *Diaries,* and even Allen Ginsberg's "Wichita Vortex Sutra," which is the first installment of an announced ambition to collage all of America.

By the seventies, this Poundian influence is, alas, fundamentally conservative, as indeed are nearly all post-Poundian poets. It has been academicized, most post-Poundians of note holding professorships and lecturing widely; and undergraduates can now freely write post-Poundian poems for academic credit. The *Cantos* can also be cited to rationalize obscurity, in addition to all kinds of creative self-indulgence, sheer stupidity, and ineffectual formlessness, etc.; so that more bad poetry in America today is indebted to Pound than anyone else. (In this tradition, as fomentor of American dreck, has he succeeded Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.) Indeed, collage itself is by now such an exhausted technique, that it rarely provides any new illuminations in any art form today; and in this respect, perhaps the greatest implicit weakness of Pound's new Cantos stems precisely from his unwillingness to confront at this point—and as Stravinsky did at a comparable age—the problem of stylistic alternatives.

The remaining aesthetic truth is that Pound's freedom in handling poetry's materials clearly implies the opportunity to transcend the *Cantos'* pet compositorial techniques; and some of his tentative innovations, such as spatial placement and the use of both visual ma-

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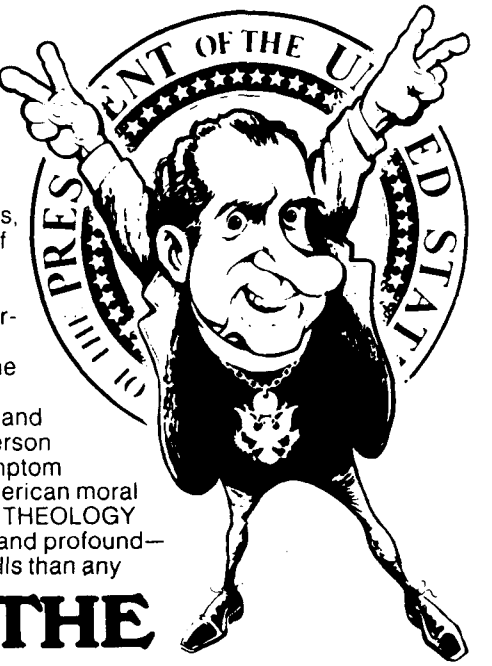
God is an American and Nixon is his prophet.



Blasphemous as it sounds, it is the unspoken belief of many Americans, says theologian Charles P. Henderson, Jr. This lingering "God's on our side" attitude is what permits the President to pursue his policies of brinkmanship and the grand gesture. Henderson thus views Nixon as a symptom rather than a cause of American moral imperialism. THE NIXON THEOLOGY is a far more disturbing—and profound—appraisal of our political ills than any pseudo-psycho-analytical condemnation of "Tricky Dickie." $6.95

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BAD DAYS ON THE RUE MORGUE

JOHN HEIDENRY

Detective novels are for people who hate style. Nearly every book in the genre could qualify as an anti-novel. They have no moral worth, philosophical ambition, or nobility of style. It is fiction that suits the middle-class mind; as pseudo-literature for buffs and literary amateurs, it resists and outlasts every revolution of the word, any innovation of the sensibility. Yet the detective story is the invention of Edgar Allen Poe. The case histories of Sherlock Holmes certainly belong among the canon of English prose. Joseph Conrad wrote several masterful detective adventures; and not long ago the front-page reviewer of the *Times Literary Supplement,* upon publication of the autobiography of Graham Greene, wondered whether that writer's earlier detective novels such as *This Gun for Hire* were not considerably superior to sentimental and overrated works like *End of the Affair* and *The Power and the Glory.* One could add others: Dickens, Collins, Chesterton, Hemingway. Borges, an Anglo-Americanophile (and not, as Alfred Kazin has suggested, the Washington Irving of Latin America but its Edgar Allen Poe, if anything) has produced some extraordinary detective short stories. There is not too much more. The rest is foul play, the work of dastards. Elementary, as it were.

On the other hand, a novel that has been making news, literally, as well as literarily, lately, is Ross Macdonald's *The Underground Man.* The back cover of the paperback edition (Bantam, $1.25; hardcover Knopf, $5.95) quotes as follows from a *Newsweek* cover story on the author: "His tough but humane detective, Lew Archer, is a beloved hero to crime buffs from Oslo to Tokyo, so beloved indeed that 5.6 million copies of Macdonald's 22 novels have been sold to date. In *The Underground Man,* Archer-Macdonald are working together at their peak, piecing together a most modern American tragedy, making literature out of the thriller form, gazing more clearly than ever into the future as it rolls through the smog."

This not mere hyperbole, it is a pack of lies. The detective part of the book is sufficiently entertaining in that there is a plot of some complexity. The characterization is all Central Casting—the usual scotch-drinking businessman, rich widow, runaway daughter, distraught wife, and even once again the simpleton of a son who is overly protected by his of course cunningly domineering mother. As for the prose style ("making literature out of the thriller form"), it has no spontaneity, energy, dexterity, brightness, boldness, or whatever the hell it should have to recommend itself as even halfway immortal. The sentences are efficient but labored, though the really annoying thing is Mr. Macdonald's compulsive use of similes—often three or four, but nearly always at least one to a page. That would make more than two hundred, and not one was any good. Watching them go by was like losing track of the boxcars on an interminable freight train at a crossing on a hot afternoon in the middle of nowhere.

Two other well-known detective writers have published books recently: Erle Stanley Gardner's posthumous Perry Mason collection *The Case of the Irate Witness* (Morrow, $4.95), and *Nemesis* by Agatha Christie (Dodd, Mead, $6.95), her eighty-first and not featuring Hercule Poirot but the spinster heroine Miss Jane Marple. The dope on both is that, if you must read soporifics, try the funny pages (or maybe *Newsweek*).

The former book is distinguished only in that, so far as is known, the title tale is the only one ever to feature Perry Mason in the short-story form (three novellas also are included). The set-up, execution of the crime, courtroom solution, and wind-down of each are identical to what one has seen on the television series starring the same inveterate trio of trial lawyer Mason, confidential secretary Della Street, and private investigator Paul Drake; but you can watch the reruns on television for nothing and see the same thing.

Dame Agatha at least writes a competent English, a bit fluffy and insubstantial, but nevertheless at most times correct. It is only too bad that in this latest offering she did not follow the example of Mr. Gardner and compress everything into a short story, I am amazed at the flimsiness of the overdrawn plot, the reading of which at last becomes tedious *in extremis.* The author is accustomed to publishing a new book every year on her birthday; but I suggest that perhaps this year she merely blow out the candles, and provide her readers (and her flagging muse) the respite of silence.

Perhaps things will get better in Latin America. The literary soil down there is still organic, as not a few recent books have shown. A new collection is *Latin Blood: The Best Detective Stories of South America* (McGraw-Hill, $5.95), Yet most of the contributors derive from the British-American tradition, and except for two stories by the Argentinian there is nothing spectacular. Such poor showing may be an indication that, on an awakening continent, there are better things to write than crime-club entertainment for people without the stamina and integrity to read something decent for a change with their free time.

JOHN HEIDENRY *ekes out a scary existence as a free-lance writer. His most recent appearance is in Harlan Ellison's* Again, Dangerous Visions.

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(Continued from page 411)

terials and other languages, all suggest far more elaborate development. Beyond that let me judge that the quality which is most alive today in the *Cantos* is their encompassing vision (notwithstanding the dominance of romance and oriental cultures); for this dimension, like all examples of continuing relevance, has rarely been imitated successfully and never surpassed. Nonetheless, the *Cantos* are by now such a powerful milestone that perhaps the easiest measure of genuine "newness" in modernist poetry today is this: Whether the work at hand moves beyond not only the old forms of structure and lyricism, but also beyond the compositional vocabulary of the *Cantos*. In this respect, it is as an anthology of things that need no longer be done that this book is most worth reading, or rereading, now.

Behold the Spirit

ALAN WATTS

Pantheon, $5.95

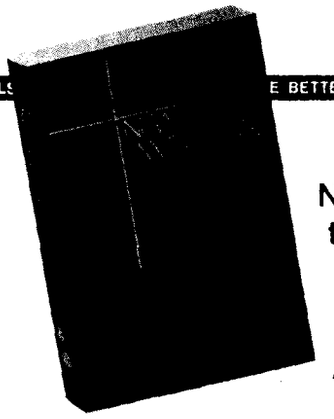
T. PATRICK BURKE

Recently we discovered acupuncture. The news magazines were filled with photos of scalps stuck with needles. The ancient Chinese technique was greeted by turns with suspicion curiosity, amusement, enthusiasm and the swift predictable oblivion that now awaits even the most tragic news. The present status of acupuncture is that of an intriguing but alien and doubtful remedy.

Alan Watts offers a medicine to revive the failing strength of Christianity, a remedy similarly both intriguing and alien to many Christians. Salvation will come to Christianity not through faith, and equally not through good works, but through mysticism. It must be transformed into a mystical religion, its emphasis centering on man's union with God, even in some sense his identity with God. This divine oneness is not something to be worked for in the far-off future: it already exists in the present. Man is already one with God, and needs only to discover that truth.

Varieties of mysticism have occurred in most of the world's religions. The special contribution of Christianity would lie in an incarnational mysticism. Too often the mystic has spurned the flesh. The Christian believes in a God who was made flesh and dwelt among us. Even though Christians have traditionally let themselves be led into a Manichaean rejection of the body, their religion has a fresher spring to drink from. A truly Christian mysticism would be a fully human mysticism.

Mr. Watts wants to say that the only form of Christianity that has a chance of surviving, or at least of doing any good by surviving, is a mystical Christianity. But first he is faced with the necessity of justifying the enterprise of mysticism itself, as he realizes. The mystic claims to experience a union with God. So close that in some sense he is identical with God. It is this oneness with God that gives meaning and joy to his life. But in what sense can he be identical with God?



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How can he avoid the charge of pantheism?

The individual must preserve his uniqueness. He is not to be absorbed into an ocean of oneness where his personality is lost. The differences between things must remain. In order to make this possible, a "logic of non-duality" is suggested which owes much to Ramanuja. God has the power to be what he is not. He can "other" himself. The key to this idea is a special way of conceiving of the oneness of God, developed particularly in Vedanta philosophy. God is not one in a numerical sense simply: that would imply the idea of "two." He is One-without-a-second, he is that which has no opposite. Creatures have their opposites, which are mutually exclusive: light is not darkness. God transcends these distinctions, and so is able to include them. In Christian terms this is an extension of the negative theology of Pseudo-Dionysius and Thomas Aquinas to the idea of oneness itself: we cannot say that God is one, any more than we can say that he is wise or good; we can only say that he is not dual, just as we can say that he is not unwise, and not evil. By contrast the oneness of God and the world for the pantheist is numerical: all things are one, and God himself cannot transcend this limitation.

This bit of metaphysical reasoning is the hinge on which Watts' case for Christian mysticism turns. Unfortunately he devotes only a couple of pages to it, scarcely more than I have here. It is not worked out with any systematic rigor. The reader is left with a suggestion rather than an argument. If the suggestion were clearer, it might be convincing. As it is presented, it is not quite.

Christians feel uneasy about mysticism for another reason. The mystic, at least the Christian mystic, who alone is in question here, claims to experience God. This is an astonishing, even an outrageous claim. A God who can be experienced is not transcendent, and so is not God. Mr. Watts acknowledges this difficulty and seeks to get around it in a two-fold way. First, God is not only transcendent, but immanent, which is more important. Second, the mystic's experience of God is not direct. It must be granted that the immanence of God is as important as his transcendence, and has received far too little attention from Christians. But God's immanence does not do away with his transcendence, so the problem remains. Then, what would an "indirect" experience be? All experience is immediate. So what exactly is the mystic experiencing? Many Christians suspect that he is experiencing an illusion. Perhaps God can overcome our logic. But how do we know that the mystic is experiencing what he says he is experiencing? There are no public tests available. The experience must be self-authenticating. But this just will not do. Any absurdity can be asserted in the name of a purely private self-authenticating experience.

Mystical experiences are high-voltage experiments. They require maturity of intellectual taste. To distribute them around indiscriminately is an ultimate lack of seriousness. Mr. Watts anticipates this objection, and tells us we are too serious. He has a splendid passage on mature taste as a criterion of truth. He sees the problem. But the maturity of taste he speaks of is not common. If it is claimed by a mystic, one would like to see it exhibited in other spheres of life too.

Within Christianity mysticism must remain the province of a small, exceptionally adult spiritual elite. It is not for everyone. Christianity cannot be transformed into a mystical religion.

There is a third reason for the dissonance between Christianity and mysticism, and I believe it is even more fundamental. Like the other major religions of semitic origin, Christianity has a center of concern focussed on relationships between people. The decisive thing for entrance into the Kingdom of God is the way we treat our neighbor. Mystical religion by contrast is centered on the self. The decisive thing is the expansion of the self, and sometimes its elimination. Mystical religion is not centrally concerned with the way people treat one another. No man can serve two masters, and no religion can have two divergent centers of concern. It is entirely appropriate for a Buddhist or a Hindu to be a mystic. For the Christian it involves a logical and also an existential paradox.

If these remarks should leave any reader with the impression that this is a slight book, that would be a pity. The book is not a lightweight. It is an exceptionally able attempt to defend the mystical in terms acceptable to a Christian. It was first published in 1947, and in a preface to this new edition the author notes that it was written during the experiment of trying to immerse himself in Christianity. It may be doubted whether the immersion was complete, but if the experiment produced no other result than this book it would have been worth it.

The book is written in the author's usual lively style: sometimes his words run away with him, one could wish that the thinking was more careful, the ideas less hazy, the argument more rigorous. The marvel is that the book should have been written at all at that time. It anticipated the subsequent popularity of mysticism by twenty years, and its republication now is to be welcomed. The God of mystical experience is at least a living God, while the religionless Christianity we have been subjected to is a wan, bloodless wraith, and the institutional churches have come to look daily more like the field of dry bones in Ezechiel's vision.

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REVIEWERS

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ity mysticism remains doubtful and even alien. As an enterprise in its own right there is no good reason why it should cease to be intriguing.

CORRESPONDENCE

(Continued from page 395)

in Vietnam? Everything we do has economic implications, and it is obvious that Lockheed and many generals have a direct economic interest in the war. However, it seems equally obvious that even if the U.S. kills the last Vietnamese and occupies the country for a hundred years the war in Vietnam is economically, by any standard, a complete catastrophe. P. Berrigan talks about expenditures of the order of 300 billion dollars. Those figures are out of proportion with any profit all American corporations can make all over the world. Of all human passions the love of money is not the worst. Pride was Adam's sin. Pride, ambition for power, domination of people, hate, those are the spiritual roots of evil. We had our little Napoleon and when he withdrew at the sight of the coming Waterloo he was replaced by the embodiment of deceit and cynicism.

P. Berrigan does not give its due to human stupidity. Doesn't he listen to Sunday sermons, and read the speeches and predictions of our generals and admirals?

A. J. DURELLI

Humble, Texas

To the Editors: I deeply admire Philip Berrigan ["An Open Letter to a Bishop," May 26] and his brother, Dan. For me they have been heroes for a number of years. I am a parish priest and have privately and publicly resisted the war in Southeast Asia for a number of years. I read the letter to Bishop Baum with much interest. I am afraid that I found Philip Berrigan to be rather arrogant in his judgments of American Catholics and clergy. He accuses the American Catholic people of being afraid of questioning, initiative, creativity, courage, fear of sacrifice, loneliness, criticism, self, neighbor, Gospel, Christ. He identifies such people as "them." I wish that he would have included himself and Dan to some degree, as courageous as they have been. My criticism is this: Philip Berrigan's judgment of the scene is too simplistic. Perhaps that is the special license of the prophet. It just makes the rest of us feel sort of shabby.

There is more than one way of suffering. There is more than one type of violence. There is more than one type of loneliness. I think this, perhaps, is a lesson that Bishop Baum could teach Philip Berrigan in their fraternal relationship. There is a tension, a strong tension, for a priest between wanting to go all out in his opposition to the war or to the "powers" and yet still retain an effective relationship with the community he was ordained to serve as presiding brother. I am not sure Phil understands this tension. He has resolved it in one way. I only request that he show greater respect for those who are laboring to resolve the tension along other lines. We both seek the same goals, I think.

I deeply admire the Berrigan brothers and the others who have given such dramatic witness to the values of the Gospel. I only ask for some understanding for those of us, clergy and lay, who are trying to witness to these same values in other ways.

(REV.) WILLIAM D. STEELE

Michael Novak (Cont.)

in act, cut a beautiful swath across our nation's history, and provided legends to parallel ancient lives of saints. It has provided much-needed food for our imaginations.

But what I miss, and perhaps I am not alone, is a vigorous sense for small detail, humble coalitions, comfortableness with the mediocre qualities of the human personality (not least of our heroes), willingness to use and to shape power and to bear its ambiguities, close measuring of interests and resources, steady resistance to and suspicion of enthusiasm, an instinct for the necessity of institutions and the long-range view. I miss, in short, a respect for the organic inter-relatedness of persons, families, institutions, societies, that used to be deemed preeminently Catholic. (We were, in Tillich's phrase, too "priestly" and not sufficiently "prophetic.")

The liberal Catholic is and remains a person of empirical, pragmatic temper, tutored by a larger sense of self, communities and history than the classic traditions of English or American philosophy provide. His task is, and remains, a task of enlarging the givenness of American culture: making a distinctively Catholic contribution.

What distinguishes the liberal Catholic from the conservative Catholic is his critical openness to the intellectual and social achievements of modern and (largely) non-Catholic cultures. What distinguishes him from the radical Catholic is, first, his avoidance of "the myth of the Pure Protester;" and, secondly, his instinct for the cultural values of the lower middle class, as a corrective against those of the "enlightened" and the (romanticized) "poor."

What distinguishes the liberal Catholic from the secular liberal *used to be* his resistance to a merely bureaucratic, technical, managerial "realism," in the name of a more organic, communal Christian realism. What distinguishes him *today* tends to be a continuance of that resistance, plus the opening of a second front: his resistance to the new, chic swing of the pendulum of self-righteousness, not least among those who used to be liberal but now are converted and pure.

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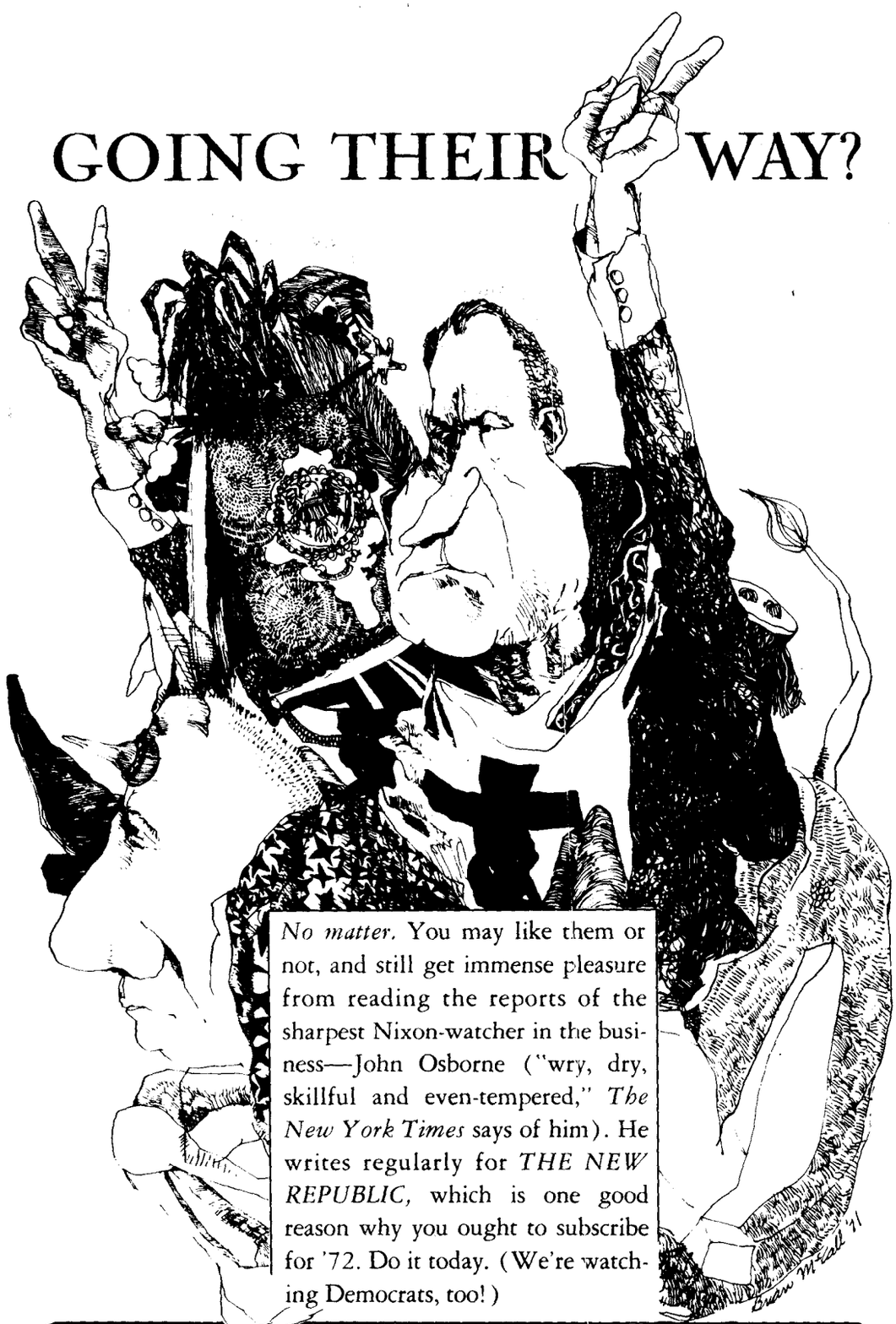

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